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THE MUSICAL TIMES,

And Singing Class Circular.

SEPTEMBER 1st, 1848.

Services and Anthems by DR. WILLIAM BOYCE, *for one, two, three, four, five, and eight voices. The separate Accompaniment for the Organ by* VINCENT NOVELLO. Volumes 1 and 2. Novello, Dean-street, Soho.

Several of the productions contained in this collection of cathedral music—the *Te Deum* and *Jubilate in A*, the full anthem “By the waters of Babylon,” the anthem for two voices, “If we believe that Jesus died,” and that for five, “Oh where shall wisdom be found,” have long been established in the highest estimation; and we are of opinion that the whole collection recommends itself on the score of practical utility in the church service beyond any other, on account of the great variety of the voices and movements, and the moderate length of the different compositions. It is very gratifying to see such labour as is performed in this publication undertaken in behalf of a master to whose taste and diligence the national cathedral music is so much indebted as Boyce. His own published collection of services and anthems, the “*Cathedral Music*,” is a noble monument to his memory, alike characteristic of his moral and artistic worth, his disinterestedness and quiet enthusiasm.

But what a difference between the two ages of publication—that in which Boyce issued his collection, and the present! The art of making a clear score was in his day so little understood by engravers; the placing of the notes in the various parts under those with which they were connected in point of time was so utterly neglected, that what with this, and the habit of putting the semibreves often midway between the bars, or extending a note from one bar into the next by means of a dot, the musician seldom had a more complicated mental task than in deciphering the true meaning of any composition from such parts. To accompany or play from the score at sight was nearly impossible, except habit had in some degree conquered the difficulty.

In the edition of Boyce's anthems before us, everything is done to promote the comprehension of the author, and to facilitate a correct and beautiful performance. The vocal scores are placed so as to be read with the utmost facility; thus arranged they assist the singer, and enable the accompanist to assure himself that a composition is rightly performed, or to correct any irregularity on the instant. Nor is he at all embarrassed by any of those passages of introductory or intermediate symphony which the organist was formerly wont to supply from his own

invention. The organ part does all for him, even to suggesting the accompanying stops; the whole work is, therefore, as well adapted to the part singing of musical families, as it is in choirs to aid any accompanist who may not have spent a long noviciate in cathedral duty.

Taken altogether, the anthems of Boyce show a most interesting diversity of style and command of expression. The composer appears to have preserved the individuality of his musical nature freer from the influences of Handel than his master, Dr. Maurice Greene. Purcell's sweet and natural strain of melody is evidently an object of attainment with Boyce, especially in his services, and in the last verse of the *Te Deum* in C, “O Lord in thee have I trusted,” he seems to reach his model. There cannot be a better example of the chaste simplicity of melody at which he aimed than the duet for trebles, “The sorrows of my heart are enlarged,” incidental to the anthem, “Turn thee unto me.” The first five-part chorus in E minor might be Clari, the last in the major, Handel; but that plaintive intervening duet bears the impress of Dr. Boyce. He always satisfies that first condition of vocal music—a good melody. Sometimes he surprises by an elegance and modernity in his part-writing even beyond the Italian masters who were so close an object of his study. The verse for four voices, “Whoso doeth these things,” in the anthem, “Lord who shall dwell,” can scarcely, from the elegance of the progressions, the fine parts and graceful rhythmical form of the melody at the cadence, be believed to be coeval with Handel. In truth it would seem to belong more to that advanced period of the art at which Haydn produced his *Stabat*.

The originality of Dr Boyce is not, however, of that sustained ambitious flight which is perceived in the earlier cathedral masters. His invention is chastened by his extensive learning; he aims more to be correct and finished than to strike with surprise. In much of his music we have an index to his candid and modest disposition. However, when the genial vein is on him, he will not hinder himself, even though his invention shape something absolutely unexampled in his art. The anthem “O where shall wisdom,” is remarkable throughout the latter part, from the originality of the design—the feeling of grand effect, and sense of the amplitude and glory of the cathedral. The short chorus, “God understandeth the way thereof,” is a short and speaking memorial of Boyce's idea of choral cathedral grandeur. Handel must have enjoyed the solemn reverberation of these harmonies—even if he only caught their distant echo in cloisters, or wandering in some recess of the cathedral nave, with remoteness to heighten the religious and impressive effect. Fine canons

and fugues, interesting from the movement of their parts as organ voluntaries, form also a conspicuous part of these volumes; and it cannot but be observed with admiration, that a composer officiating as such in the Royal chapels, and who was obliged to conform, in a great measure, to the taste and inclination of his patrician hearers, should have preserved such general fidelity to taste of a high standard in the exercise of his function.

If in any part of Boyce's church music there is the impress of cathedral mannerism, and of the peculiarities of the taste of his day, it is found in his lively pieces with the organ accompaniment obligato, and sometimes in too frequently repeating a passage of melody a note higher. From the variety of his design, his excellence in declamation, and truth of expression, Boyce has established himself in permanent favour in cathedrals. The singers like him from the extraordinary smoothness and vocality of his works; organists, that his fugues and choruses are only second in grandeur to Handel's.

The example lately set in Westminster Abbey of a Purcell commemoration might be well imitated. We should like to hear of a commemoration of Croft, of Gibbons, of Boyce, &c., established in some more distant choirs, church music being the great achievement of our country.—*Atlas*, August 26th, 1848.

MOZART.

An entire new and correct Edition of the Pianoforte Works (with and without accompaniments) of this celebrated Composer. Dedicated by express permission to her Majesty the Queen. Edited by CIPRIANI POTTER. Coventry & Co., Dean-street, Soho.

The completion of this work, in nine volumes, containing airs with variations, rondos, duets, sonatas, with and without accompaniment, trios, quartets, &c., and including several compositions now first published, must be gratifying to all who are concerned in the progress of music. Mozart resembles Shakspeare in nothing more than this, that we never open his works without discovering something new that never struck us before—or even that we never saw or heard before. It seems impossible to traverse the length and breadth of his mind. New things are continually turning up in the shape of some sonata, rondo, or fugue never heard; and the musician will not be often found, who, glancing at the catalogue thematique of Mozart's works—that condensed view of the wonders of his active intellectual existence—recognises in it at once a set of familiar friends.

We scarcely know any pleasure greater than looking over the sheet of fragments and beginnings entitled the *Catalogue Thematique* of Mozart. How it calls up the memory of delightful hours, the faces and the voices of the past, recollections of sympathy and geniality. It is a perfect talisman of association. Who played, who enjoyed the locality in which we heard, and all other circumstances investing the mu-

sical pleasure, return to us instantly on the swift wings of thought. The eye quickly finds its landmarks—No. 1, the pianoforte duet in F, for instance, in which the noble page of introductory adagio is the astonishment of musicians. Those few unison notes in the catalogue awaken solemn feelings like standing in the vestibule of a temple. This duet is a work in which the pianoforte is elevated to an orchestral dignity. Mozart was almost in the disposition for a symphony when he composed it. Of the same lofty character, and worthy to be placed by the side of the movements in the *Passione* of Haydn, is the solo Adagio in B minor, No. 21; and still higher examples of this pianoforte music are found in the duet in F minor, Nos. 28 and 29, where imitations are made of Handel and Bach with that peculiar art of the composer in which he insensibly blends himself with the subject of his imitation, showing the beauty of his own style and workmanship, while he preserves their liveliest characteristics. The combination of Bach and Mozart found in the fugue, No. 29, with its double treatment, the fine melody of the *adagio*, and the startling harmonies of the introduction, form altogether such a composition, that the great artist, J. B. Cramer, has been heard to place it at the head of all music for the pianoforte—if not, indeed, of all composition itself. Among the greater monuments of Mozart's genius represented by the catalogue, we must not forget to place the fantasia in C minor, No. 3, which we once heard at Berlin performed by a large military band; nor the solo sonata in A minor, No. 42—of a dramatic and tragic character, and requiring such delicacy and force in the execution, that our ideal has seldom been realised in its performance. It is well worth notice, that rapid and brilliant as modern music has become, Mozart's pianoforte compositions, and his concertos especially, present difficulties which not unfrequently pose the player. This fact affords an argument for giving a wider circulation to those pieces which are formed to promote education and the acquirement of solid execution.

In solo pieces adapted to this purpose, modest and unpretending in their design and style, but with beauties which melodious taste and sensibility will appreciate, the catalogue abounds. Compositions addressing two orders of taste like the Rondo in A minor, No. 19, followed by an air with variations in the major—the one profound and impassioned, the other light and graceful, have often been judiciously separated in this collection. Mozart piqued himself on pleasing hearers of all classes; but he liked to insinuate his own preferences where it was possible. The natural beauty of the variations No. 19, charms the ear, and makes practice and improvement go hand in hand. Mere beginners may take up such a rondo as that in D, No. 33, or the one in B flat, No. 11; but if a player wants a cheerful sonata with some work in it, abounding in fine parts, elegant melody and fancy, we recommend him to look at No. 9, in F. Even the early and easier sonatas possess a certain charm; they bring into practice the neat, close, even fingering of the Mozart school; they have all a certain characteristic individual face, and interest even by their simplicity. Their beauty steals upon you like that of a wild flower in a wood. A player must have lost all simplicity and elegance of taste who cannot enjoy such a sonata as that in B flat No. 59, marked as it is by the fashion of the day.